



received
6-27-11

MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY

June 23, 2011

Dr. David Russell
Commissioner of Higher Education
Department of Higher Education
205 Jefferson Street
POB 1469
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Dear Commissioner Russell:

Thank you for your letter of June 17 regarding Missouri Southern's responses to your queries about Southern's request for a waiver of the penalty imposed under the Higher Education Student Funding Act for a tuition increase above the CPI. I have provided the Chair of the Board of Governors, Dr. Sherry Buchanan, with your letter, and in consultation with her, I have been assured that the Board of Governors authorized a 9.27 percent tuition increase with the full understanding that Missouri Southern needed such an increase to ensure that students had available to them a quality education that, nevertheless, remained the most affordable of any state university in Missouri. Thus, I have been instructed to communicate the Board's affirmation of the 9.27 percent tuition increase for the 2011-12 academic year.

I join with the Board of Governors in expressing our appreciation for the due diligence you have conducted in reviewing our request for a waiver of the penalty for exceeding the CPI. You have been extremely professional in your approach, and the level of consultation you have made available to us has assured us that your dual concerns for affordable and quality education have been constantly in the forefront of the helpful and instructive advice you have given us. Thank you for being a very effective advocate for students.

We, also, consider ourselves student advocates, and although the disaster created by the EF5 tornado surely will have a variety of negative economic consequences for the people of Joplin, including many of our students, staff, and faculty, I believe the Board of Governors has decided to affirm the legitimate need for increased tuition because of the long-term economic realities that face Southern and virtually all public institutions of higher education in the U.S. Indeed, until such time as the state is able to adequately fund higher education, MSSU's Board along

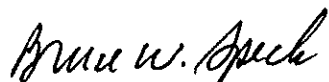
with other governing boards of higher education throughout Missouri, will have to consider all possible means to provide a quality education. Short of cutting programs, continuing not to provide salary increases to our employees, furloughing faculty and staff, and using other draconian measures that ultimately erode the quality of higher education, the Board of Governors will continue to seek ways to promote student welfare, including increasing tuition to close the gap between state support and institutional needs.

In addition to long-term efforts to promote student welfare, we are attempting to address the short-term economic devastation a portion of our students face by establishing a fund to help them and other members of the Southern family. We are acutely aware that fall enrollment will probably suffer because of the disorientation—economic and otherwise—that has had a pronounced impact on the people of Joplin. However, as the president of MSSU, and in accordance with the wishes of the Board of Governors, the responsibility for the long-term good of Southern cannot be unduly minimized by a disaster that has raised legitimate short-term concerns about the economic viability of a portion of our students to continue their education in the short term.

Along with all of those in Joplin and at Southern, I am deeply grateful for your support of the relief effort here. Thank you for initiating a conversation about how you and the entire public higher education community could help students during this time of recovery, which, surely, will last several years. I deeply appreciate your genuine concern for the well-being of students throughout Missouri and your specific concern for Southern students in the midst of crisis recovery.

I hope that this letter will serve as an adequate response to your request that the Board of Governors reconsider the 9.27 percent tuition increase that it unanimously approved at its May meeting and that the Chair of the Board of Governors has instructed me to reaffirm in light of your request to reconsider that decision.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Bruce W. Speck". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Bruce W. Speck